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THEOSOPHY

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

THE BROTHERHOOD OF HUMANITY

THE STUDY OF OCCULT SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

AND ARYAN LITERATURE

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I *To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color;*

II *The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and*

III *The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.*

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The mind operates or exists for the carrying out of the soul's salvation, and not the soul for the mind's sake. —WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

THEOSOPHY

VOLUME 53 NOVEMBER, 1964 NUMBER 1

BEYOND ILLUSION

> [The] Ego, progressing in an arc of ascending subjectivity, must exhaust the experience of every plane.
>
> *The Secret Doctrine*

IF we take seriously the teachings of *The Secret Doctrine* concerning evolution, it may be difficult to see how individual egos, deeply involved in the attractions, the tasks, and the perspectives of a particular level of consciousness, can be moved to take up the path that leads to initiation. No one who is at all self-observant can fail to have noticed the strong grip of his present sense of "reality." Indeed, for him to be "turned loose," to have broken the moorings which seem to hold him in vital relationship with the world as he understands it, can hardly appear as a service, for where, then, will he live, on what will he depend, until there is born in him a new sense of reality?

The Theosophical Movement may be compared to a net which fishermen let down into the sea. It gathers in those for whom the tenuous strands of the net give a promise which they do not find in the world about them, while others are not touched by it at all. It is a mystery of Karma—this selection exercised by the attraction of the Theosophical Movement. We cannot explain how it works, yet we know that it does work.

How, the student may ask himself, can people fail to recognize the truth of Theosophy? How can they go on with their ordinary activities, seeing nothing of the transcendent meaning for the soul

which the Wisdom Religion provides? The mystery is really two-fold. There is the aspect of Karma, about which we can at least make some theories; but there is also the incommensurable factor of the spontaneous and unconditioned action of the Ego. Of this latter "cause" we can know nothing, since it is the principle which makes man free.

But of Karma we can speak. There is first of all the "plane" which represents that ego's stage of progress or evolutionary degree. The attractions of that plane are what brought the ego to birth. And its experiences are what the ego must "exhaust," before it can go on to other phases of "relative" reality. Then there is the play of the three qualities on the engagement of the ego on that plane. The qualities determine, according to the ego's relation to them, the varying intensities of the soul's involvement. A great reformer, a campaigner and crusader, will see "reality" and define the "good" in the terms of his heart's longing for the betterment of others. He will take and use ideas which promote his cause, while other ideas will seem to him pale and useless abstractions. For a man wrapped up in the tasks of changing the ugly particulars of the social environment in a given epoch of history, the larger realities of universal truths may seem unreal, irrelevant. He has to wear out the energy of his lifetime's meditation, which in this case is the profound commitment of his heart.

Other forms of involvement excite less admiration. They have to do with personal acquisitiveness, the fear of losing one's place or standing in the world, and all the personal longings and anxieties which the modern psychologists catalog so carefully and at such length. These are also "experiences" which must be exhausted, and they are worn out, not in the heroic fashion of the great and devoted man, but by the slow but inevitable failure of the ego to taste the satisfactions on which fulfillment, as he understands it, depends. So there are countless ways in which the plane now engrossing the entire mass of egos exerts its influence and accomplishes its confinement of their perceptions. It is as though, from the raw materials of a given cycle, each individual constructs his private universe, his personal gymnasium and field of action. What will make him look up and out into the wider world? We do not know. We know only that some *do* look up and out, and sometimes see more clearly than we do ourselves.

To this way of regarding the mystery, we should add one further

consideration. In every man there is an incommensurable element of selfhood. This is the unpredictable factor, the origin of all self-initiation, without whose stirring presence the initiations made possible by teachers could not take place. There are moments of freedom in human life when the ego, shorn of the limitations of the hour, looks into the endless depths of Being. What then will he see? Only the metaphysical nothingness of endless expanse? Or will his eye catch the glint of reflected glories—the wonders of, in the *Gita's* phrase, the Vision of the Divine Form as Including All Forms? Depending upon the perceptions of that moment, there may develop in him a new center of gravity, a tiny nuclear center which accepts no version of "relative reality" as the stuff of true existence. He may go on with his old life; indeed, he *must* go on with his old life. The law holds; the plane's illusions still have to be understood, assimilated, made into what can be made of them, and by this means lose their power to blind.

But, somehow, the ego has begun its alchemist's career, in the midst of all the other involvements. And *this* center of awareness will never have to be "left behind." It represents an order of experience that has no alliance with the limiting circumstances of the cycles, the crowding insistences of time and place. It is the fabric of his everlasting life, the subtle vehicle which will endure throughout the whole Manvantara.

How shall we address this secret self? We cannot, for we do not know its cipher. This we must leave to the authors of the *Upanishads,* and renderers of the Golden Precepts, such as H.P.B., who have in the rhythm of their own inner life the harmonies of all potential understanding.

It is something, however, to know that all real growth of soul goes on in this secret place of the inner man. And then, trusting in the law, without fear and without reproach, we may sow better than we know.

THE THEOSOPHY OF THE UPANISHADS

OF all the great scriptures which pre-date creedal forms of belief, the ancient *Upanishads* of India can most easily lay claim to embodiment of universal inspiration. For they touch not only the precepts of great teachers, such as Buddha, Jesus of Nazareth, and Lao-tse—each addressed, in part, to the particular of a specific epoch in philosophical evolution; the form of the *Upanishads* suggests that esoteric wisdom must arise from within each human soul, and therefore the authors of the *Upanishads* are of apparent insignificance as persons. We do not know the names of the authors, even though some of the chief doctrines are associated with famous sages. Not rooted in historicity, the *Upanishads* have always, then, been regarded as *sanatana*—immemorial, timeless. In *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 270), H. P. Blavatsky writes: "The *Upanishads* . . . treat of and expound the secret and mystic meaning of the Vedic texts. They speak of the origin of the Universe, the nature of Deity, and of Spirit and Soul, as also of the metaphysical connection of mind and matter. In a few words: They CONTAIN *the beginning and the end of all human knowledge.*" H.P.B. further speaks of that "priceless thesaurus of the *Vedanta—Upa-ni-shad* being a compound word meaning 'the conquest of ignorance by the revelation of *secret, spiritual* knowledge'." Buddha evidently determined that the teachings of the *Upanishads* should not be withheld by the Brahmins, and in *The Secret Doctrine* it is suggested that the Brahmins, objecting to the popularizing of the *Upanishads,* abridged and removed many of the texts, so that the total meaning is not apt to be found by those who do not possess what H.P.B. calls "the master key" of theosophical understanding. Yet there is no doubt that the language and content of the *Upanishads* are universal in scope.

Emerson's reflections upon the *Upanishads* led him to remark that during their study "many truths arise out of the recesses of consciousness." And what are these truths? In Charles Johnston's *From the Upanishads,* the translator quotes the following passages from Emerson's writings:

> We learn that the highest is present to the soul of man; that the dread universal essence, which is not wisdom, or love, or beauty, or power, but all in one, and each entirely, is that for which all things exist, and that by which they are; that spirit creates; that behind nature, throughout nature, spirit is present.
>
> The human mind takes no account of geography, language, or legends, but in all utters the same instinct.
>
> Within every man's thought is a higher thought; within the character he exhibits to-day, a higher character. The youth puts off the illusions of the child; the man puts off the ignorance and tumultuous passions of youth; proceeding thence, puts off the egotism of manhood, and becomes at last a public and universal soul. He is rising to greater heights, but also rising to realities; the other relations and circumstances dying out.

Here is the spirit of "transcendentalism," and as so often when this spirit breathes, some connective with the inspiration of the *Upanishads* is noted. The first page of the Preface to Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's *The Principal Upanishads* presents, for example, a few words of Walt Whitman's as indicative of the upanishadic spirit: "These are really the thoughts of all men in all ages and lands; they are not original with me. If they are not yours as much as mine, they are nothing or next to nothing." Radhakrishnan then speaks of the "esotericism" of the *Upanishads*:

> Human nature is not altogether unchanging but it does remain sufficiently constant to justify the study of ancient classics. The problems of human life and destiny have not been superseded by the striking achievements of science and technology. The solutions offered, though conditioned in their modes of expression by their time and environment, have not been seriously affected by the march of scientific knowledge and criticism. The responsibility laid on man as a rational being, to integrate himself, to relate the present to the past and the future, to live in time as well as in eternity, has become acute and urgent. The Upanishads, though remote in time from us, are not remote in thought. They disclose the working of the primal impulses of the human soul which rise above the differences of race and of geographical position. At the core of all historical religions there are fundamental types of spiritual experience though they are expressed with different degrees of clarity. The Upanishads illustrate and illuminate these primary experiences.

An esoteric teaching or a "secret doctrine" is to be recognized as either immanent in doctrine or transcendent of it—impossible of being explicitly revealed. The Upanishads, then, as the Theosophy

of ages past, were addressed to those endeavoring to exchange reliance upon doctrines for wisdom. Since wisdom must be distilled in the crucible of one's own experience, equated with reason and made luminous by the intuition, the mind of such a disciple must be freed from reliance upon traditional ideative forms; one cannot achieve wisdom until he is ready to forget his preconceptions, to open his understanding to the perceptions of broader horizons. The *Upanishads* are meant to assist in this process. Dr. Radhakrishnan suggests this in a discussion of "Samkara"—

> Samkara derives the word *upanishad* as a substantive from the root *sad,* "to loosen," "to reach" or "to destroy" with *upa* and *ni* as prefixes and *kvip* as termination. If this derivation is accepted, *upanishad* means brahma-knowledge by which ignorance is loosened or destroyed.
>
> The Upanishads which base their affirmations on spiritual experience are invaluable for us, as the traditional props of faith, the infallible scripture, miracle and prophecy are no longer available. The irreligion of our times is largely the product of the supremacy of religious technique over spiritual life. The study of the Upanishads may help to restore to fundamental things of religion that reality without which they seem to be meaningless.

We are invited now to consider the referents of upanishadic learning, for these texts are not composed of ethical and moral precepts, nor do they refer to specific metaphysical doctrines. The referents of the *Upanishads* are the universal experiences of human consciousness and, more particularly, the experiences of sleep, dreams and death. It is in this context that we must consider the representation of "death" as the instructor—the *life* experience which may help us to learn that no new attainments are possible until we are ready to "die" so far as past attainments are concerned. We must be loosened from the bondage to any particular embodiment if we seek a larger existence.

In these brief commentaries, we shall refer to those of the upanishadic texts provided by the translations of Charles Johnston, made easily accessible for Theosophical students in the *Selections from The Upanishads and The Tao Te King* (issued by Cunningham Press and distributed by The Theosophy Company). But no commentary on the *Upanishads* should be attempted unless the poetry and the spirit of the text are allowed to speak for themselves. In the prologue of the *Brihad Upanishad,* we encounter universalism of im-

agery in the dialogue between the wandering teacher Yajnavalkya and the king of the Videhas. This king, a man on the way to wisdom, desired to ask questions of Yajnavalkya, and, since this was the proper approach, Yajnavalkya assented. The dialogue then proceeds:

> Yajnavalkya, what is the light of the Spirit of man?
>
> The sun is his light, O king; he answered. With the sun as his light he rests, goes forth, does his work, and returns.
>
> This is so in truth, Yajnavalkya. But when the sun is set, Yajnavalkya, what is then the light of the Spirit of man?
>
> The moon then becomes his light; he answered. With the moon as his light he rests, goes forth, does his work, and returns.
>
> This is so in truth, Yajnavalkya. But when the sun is set, Yajnavalkya, and the moon is also set, what is then the light of the Spirit of man?
>
> Fire then becomes his light; he answered. With fire as his light he rests, goes forth, does his work, and returns.
>
> This is so in truth, Yajnavalkya. But when the sun is set, Yajnavalkya, and the moon is also set, and the fire sinks down, what is then the light of the Spirit of man?
>
> Voice then becomes his light; he answered. With voice as his light he rests, goes forth, does his work, and returns. Therefore in truth, O king, when a man cannot distinguish even his own hand, where a voice sounds, thither he approaches.
>
> This is so in truth, Yajnavalkya. But when the sun is set, Yajnavalkya, and the moon is also set, and the fire sinks down, and the voice is stilled, what is then the light of the Spirit of man?
>
> The Soul then becomes his light; he answered. With the Soul as his light he rests, goes forth, does his work, and returns.
>
> What is the Soul?
>
> It is the Consciousness in the life-powers. It is the Light within the heart. This Spirit of man wanders through both worlds, yet remains unchanged. He seems only to be wrapped in imaginings. He seems only to revel in delights.

The "soul" has been given many definitions, in theological, philosophical, and psychological forms. At the present time, there are numerous indications that the "soul" will be continually *re*defined, as the insights of psychotherapy call for the inclusion of what may be termed a "spiritual dimension" of the human being. The definition just provided in the upanishadic text is, we may well think, incomparable: "What is the Soul? It is the Consciousness in the life-powers." But the manner of reaching the definition is also signifi-

cant, if we recall the extensive discussion preceding H.P.B.'s enunciation of the First Fundamental Proposition in *The Secret Doctrine;* it is when we have considered all of the forms of illumination which are *external* to the center of consciousness that we realize that the "light of the soul" can be described in no other terms than its own. As John McTaggart once put it:

> The self answers to the description of the fundamental differentiation of the absolute. Nothing else which we know or can imagine does so. The idea of the self has certain characteristics which can be explained if the self is taken as one of the fundamental differentiations, but of which no explanation has been offered on any other theory, except that of rejecting the idea of the self altogether, and sinking into complete scepticism. The self is so paradoxical that we can find no explanation for it, except its absolute reality.

This is not to say that no distinction may be made between "soul" and the "One Self," as spirit. But it is also true that any definition of soul which is less univeral focuses only upon finite aspects of being. It is the infinite aspect of beinghood with which the *Upanishads* are concerned—the timeless and immemorial knower who is never born, nor dies.

"SENT BY THE GODS"

As to ourselves, our soul, partaking of the divine nature, remains immortal and eternal in the precincts which are the limit of our world. Attached to a mortal envelope, it is sent by the gods now into one body, now into another, in view of the universal harmony; in order that the union of the mortal and immortal elements in human nature may contribute to the unity of the Whole.

—GEORGE GEMISTUS

letters • questions • comment

Last month's discussion of Karma raised some further questions: If a person intends to set forces in motion toward a specific end, to initiate a certain kind of activity, how does he know whether the motivation proceeds from the "higher" or the "lower" man? Does one cease to "make karma" by retiring from the world? Does not undue solicitude about making karma, either "good" or "bad," indicate a lack of philosophic understanding of the Law?

Doubtless a person begins to question the *level* of his motivation (1) only after he becomes aware of the dual aspect of his nature and (2) when he begins to feel some degree of responsibility for his motives as well as his actions.

The questioner must realize at the outset that no one can answer his question for him—the burden of philosophic understanding lies squarely on the person himself. This is a difficult stance for anyone who has been reared in a theological tradition, where the criteria of conduct are placed in a moral code outside the self; and it is equally difficult for one who has been strongly conditioned to react in a certain way to parental or social demands. Both these situations will have built up in those subjected to them a structure of values that classifies certain actions as "good" and certain others as "bad."

It is here (in the matter of labeling actions) that Theosophy parts company with both the priests of religion and the advocates of "conditioned response." For Theosophy asserts that the man himself is wholly responsible both for motive and act—there can be no special guarantors of his destiny as he tries to learn the lessons of the soul. The task of localizing the motivational level is made more difficult by realizing that motives are seldom unmixed, and by seeing how clever the lower mind is at providing "high" motives for what it wants to do. Thus, an honest questioning of motive is only one aspect of the search for a more inwardly-inspired existence. The man has become dissatisfied, let us suppose, with the trivia of life; he has observed the way most people go about attaining their goals, and has noted that these goals are usually limited to some gain in

external status. He sees, too, that those who have attained their goals are afraid of losing what they have gained. They seem to be getting nowhere—which is certainly the case. Our observer, then, has reached the point where he wishes to strive for something "real" —even if he cannot yet define the real. He has come to the point which, as Mr. Judge says, all human beings must eventually reach, where he arouses the antagonistic forces within himself—the higher forces striving to break the mold of habit, the lower working just as desperately to maintain the status quo.

The drama of this engagement is portrayed in the *Bhagavad-Gita,* offering an appeal which has a tremendous impact on Westerners. This is why Thoreau couldn't stop writing about the *Gita*—because it spoke of the inevitability of arousing within the individual contradictory forces, and influencing him to make various choices. These choices *have* to be made; and once the forces are set in motion, there is no retreat from the battlefield; we will be forever disquieted until we have come to terms with ourselves. The redeeming discipline becomes one of trying to acquire some knowledge of the language of the soul, the language of occultism, the depth-meaning of Theosophy.

Although this is a task for lives, we can at least begin by adopting those perspectives that reflect something of this language as it is expressed in the doctrines of reincarnation and karma. Through reflection on these tenets, we learn to distinguish between that in us which seems to speak in the language of continuity and fluidity rather than in the language of fixation. And we learn to discriminate between a fixation upon the thing we want, the status we wish to attain, and that in us which is striving to relate, to extend meaning and purpose. Though exceedingly difficult, this is not an impossible task; but each person has to perform it for himself in his own particular situation. He has to ask himself, Is this action motivated by the higher or lower aspect of the self? and he has to demand an honest answer. Brooding on Krishna's injunction, "Let, then, the motive for action be in the action itself, and not in the event," he may gradually assume the stance natural to the student of Theosophy.

As to the second question, "Can we refrain from making new karma by withdrawing from the world?"—actually, the person who withdraws from the prospect of involving himself in a chain of cause and effect is attempting the impossible. He may, of course,

divorce himself from certain interpersonal relationships, but by isolating himself from others he becomes imprisoned in a rigid personality. Even if he thinks he is dominated by *sattva* in making this decision, his condition is not secure; for this quality has its own gradations, including those pertaining to *tamas*—indifference or darkness. By refusing the interpersonal relationships that offer him a chance to broaden his sympathy and wear off the sharp corners of his personality structure, he becomes more and more narrow and rigid. If he persists in this unnatural situation, he eventually cuts himself off from all opportunities to fulfill himself—contracting his sphere of activity, and finally reversing the process of "initiation." Thus, as evolution proceeds, he retrogresses in relation to others who remain in the mainstream of life.

This is the worst sort of karma—much more terrible than any difficulty that arises from striving, however mistaken his goals or howsoever egotistical his view of self might have been in the striving. For correctives are offered by meeting the problems of life, and isolation gives no chance for this kind of adjustment. This particular course of "non-involvement" leads to what has been called "the death of the soul," for it is a progressive reversal of the natural course of life, a self-denial of the "rites of passage" by which we gradually teach our personalities to become *living souls*. This is acceptance of Fate, but a refusal of Destiny.

It is natural for the newcomer to Theosophical study to be at first egocentrically concerned with "karma." To begin with, the majority of inquirers have been brought up in one or another religious tradition with its emphasis upon reward (heaven) and punishment (hell) and on the idea that meritorious acts (especially "saving" another's soul) earn additional "stars in your crown." It is even possible that some of the theosophical explanations of karma seem at first to suggest this interpretation: the idea of making "good" karma, the storing up of karmic merit, etc. Continued study of the *philosophy* of karma, helps the student to realize that karma is not a mechanistic design or a diagrammatic chart drawn up at the beginning of his life, but a life *process*. Karma is the way Life works—or, so far as the individual is concerned, the way he directs his life forces. He comes to see that events (the things that happen to him) are not "karma"; they are only knots in the karmic web, knots that he must unravel and trace back to the place he went wrong in weaving his pattern. This point reached, the student real-

izes that "his" karma is not anything that *happens to him;* it lies in focal points within his inner being—magnetic centers that attract the material event. He begins to realize that "his" karma is *within him*—the very Law of his being.

When H.P.B. stated "Theosophy *is* Psychology," she doubtless meant to suggest that the philosophy of Theosophy affords a basis and suggests an attitude for self-discovery, self-transmutation, and ultimate Self-knowledge.

"NO REPINING"

Accept the words of a fellow traveller, these: Keep up the aspiration and the search, but do not maintain the attitude of despair or the slightest repining. The darkness and the desolation are sure to be ours, but they are only illusionary. Is not the Self pure, bright, bodiless, and free,—and art thou not that?

Then, too, remember that the influences of this present age are powerful. What despair and agony of doubt exist today in all places! In this time of upturning, the wise man *waits*. He bends himself, like the reed, to the blast, so that it may blow over his head. Rising, as you do, into the plane where these currents are rushing, while you try to travel higher still, you feel these inimical influences, although unknown to you. It is an age of iron. A forest of iron trees, black and forbidding, with branches of iron and brilliant leaves of steel. The winds blow through its arches and we hear a dreadful grinding and crashing sound that silences the still small voice of Love. And its inhabitants mistake this for the voice of God; they imitate it and add to its terrors. Faint not, be not self-condemned.

—WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

THE MANIFESTED FOUR

"Know, O son of Pritha, that I am Brihaspati (Jupiter), the chief of teachers." —*The Bhagavad-Gita*

WHENCE came the four Elements of ancient times? What are these Elements, whose compound bodies have now been discovered by Chemistry and Physics to contain numberless sub-elements? Four Elements only are generally considered in later antiquity, five admitted only in philosophy. For the body of ether is not *fully* manifested yet, and its noumenon is still "the Omnipotent Father—Æther, the synthesis of the rest." Metaphysically and esoterically there is but One Element in nature, at the root of which is Deity. The so-called seven Elements are the garment, the veil of that deity; direct from the essence whereof comes MAN, whether physically, psychically, mentally or spiritually considered. The four Elements were fully characterized by Plato when he said that they were that "which composes and decomposes the compound bodies." The Elements of Plato and Aristotle were the *incorporeal principles* attached to the four great divisions of our Cosmic World. Esoterically they are the hierarchies of Potencies or Forces, which are classified on a graduated scale of seven, from the ponderable to the imponderable. They are a Septenary, not as an artificial aid to facilitate their comprehension, but in their real *Cosmic* gradation; from their chemical (or physical) to their purely spiritual composition. Gods, with the ignorant masses—gods independent and supreme with the fanatics who, intellectual as they often may be, are unable to understand the spirit of the philosophical sentence, *in pluribus unum.*

Traced to their source, the four Elements are ever one and the same in every country. Whether Egyptian or Pelasgian, Aryan or Semitic, the local god (*genius loci*) embraced in its unity all Nature; but not especially the four elements any more than one of their creations, such as trees, rivers, mounts or stars. The *genius loci*—a very late afterthought of the last sub-races of the fifth root-race, when the

NOTE.—A student's collation from Theosophical sources.

primitive and grandiose meaning had become nearly lost—was ever the representative in his accumulated titles of all his colleagues. It was the god of *fire,* symbolized by thunder, as Jove or Agni; the god of *water,* symbolized by the fluvial bull or some sacred river or fountain, as Varuna, Neptune, etc.; the god of *air,* manifesting in the hurricane and tempest, as Vayu and Indra; and the god or spirit of earth, who appeared in earthquakes, like Pluto, Yama, and so many others. These were the Cosmic gods, ever synthesizing *all in one,* as found in every cosmogony and mythology. Thus the Greeks had their Dodonean Jupiter who included in himself the four Elements and the four cardinal points, and who was recognized therefore in old Rome under the pantheistic title of *Jupiter Mundus,* the one mundane God, who is made to swallow all the others in the latest theology—by the arbitrary decision of his special ministers.

Primitive religion, however, was something more than simple preoccupation with physical phenomena. Principles, more elevated than moderns know of, "were hidden under the transparent veil of such merely natural divinities as thunder, the winds and rain." With the hermetic philosopher the Elements are FORCES relatively "blind" or "intelligent," according to which of the principles in them he deals with. It required long millenniums before they found themselves, in our age, finally degraded into simple chemical elements. The ancients knew of and could distinguish the corporeal from the incorporeal and spiritual elements in the forces of nature. For let it be remembered that Fire, Water, and Air, or the "Elements of Primary Creation" so called, are not the compound Elements they are on earth—but noumenal homogeneous Elements, the Spirits thereof. It is worthy of notice that while rejecting as a superstition of Occultism, and religion too, the theory of substantial Beings called Angels, Elementals, etc.—without of course having ever looked into the philosophy of these *incorporeal* Entities, or thought over them—modern chemistry, owing to observation and discovery, should have unconsciously been forced to adopt and recognize the same ratio of progression and order in the evolution of chemical atoms, as Occultism does both for its Dhyanis and Atoms—analogy being its first law.

Fire, Air, Water, and Earth were but the visible garb, the symbols of the informing, invisible Souls or Spirits, the Cosmic gods to whom worship was offered by the ignorant, and simple respectful recognition by the wiser. In their turn the phenomenal subdivisions of the

noumenal Elements were informed by the Elementals, so called, the "Nature Spirits" of lower grades. "Ethereal fire is the emanation of a KABIR (Dhyan Chohan) proper; the *aerial* is but the union (correlation) of the former with terrestrial fire, and its guidance and application on our earthly plane belongs to a *Kabir* of a lesser dignity"—an Elemental perhaps, as an Occultist would call it. The same may also be said of every Cosmic Element. The reader is reminded that, without the smallest shadow of superstition, one may believe in the dual nature of every object on Earth—in the spiritual and the material, the visible and the invisible nature; that every Element is dual in its nature.

Thus *The Secret Doctrine* teaches that the very first group of "Rupa Angels" or those Elements which developed form, is quaternary, an element being added to each in descending order. So also are the atoms, adopting the phraseology of chemistry—monatomic, diatomic, and tetratomic, progressing downwards. Placed on parallel lines in a diagram with Atoms, the Natures of those Beings would be seen to correspond in their downward scale of progression to composite elements in a mathematically identical manner, as to analogy. This refers of course only to the diagrams made by the Occultists. For were the scale of Angelic Beings to be placed on parallel lines with the scale of the chemical atoms, they would of course be found to differ. For these have, as correspondents on the Astral plane, only the *four lower* orders—the three higher principles in the atom, or rather molecule or chemical element, being perceptible only to the initiated Dangma's eye—*i.e.*, to that of the Adept.

Belief in the "Four Maharajas" (lit., Great Kings of the Elements)—the Regents of the Four cardinal points—was universal and is now that of the Christians, who call them, after St. Augustine, "Angelic Virtues" and "Spirits" when enumerated by themselves, and "Devils" when named by Pagans. But where is the difference between the Pagans and Christians in this case? Following Plato, Aristotle explained that the term was understood only as meaning the incorporeal principles placed at the four great divisions of our Cosmical world to supervise them. Thus no more than the Christians did, do they adore and worship the Elements and the cardinal (imaginary) points, but the "gods" that ruled these respectively.

The four *great* Kings of the Dhyan Chohans (*Maharajas*) are the Devas who preside, each over one of the four cardinal points. They are the Regents or angels who rule over the cosmical forces of North,

South, East and West; Forces each having a distinct occult property. These BEINGS (hierarchies, incorporealities) are also connected with Karma, as the latter needs physical and material agents to carry out her decrees, such as the four kinds of Winds, for instance, professedly admitted by science to have their respective evil and beneficent influences upon the health of mankind and every living thing. There is occult philosophy in the Roman Catholic doctrine which traces the various public calamities, such as epidemics of disease, wars, and so on, to the invisible "Messengers" *from North and West.*

He who believes in the words and teachings of St. Paul has no right to pick out from the latter those sentences only that he chooses to accept, to the rejection of others. And St. Paul teaches most undeniably the existence of Cosmic gods and their presence among us. Paganism preached a dual and simultaneous evolution ages before the advent of that Roman Church. Exoteric phraseology has changed little with respect to divine hierarchies since the most palmy days of Paganism, or "Idolatry." Names alone have changed, along with claims which have now become false pretenses. For when Plato put in the mouth of the Highest Principle—"Father Æther" or Jupiter—these words, for instance: "The gods of the gods of whom I am the *maker* as I am the father of all their works"; he knew the spirit of this sentence as fully, we suspect, as St. Paul did when saying: "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, as there be gods many and lords many," . . . etc. (I Cor. 8:5). Both knew the sense and meaning of what they put forward in such guarded terms.

The Evangelical zoölatry—the Bull, the Eagle, the Lion, and the Angel (the Cherub, or Seraph, the fiery-winged Serpent) is as much pagan as that of the Egyptians or the Chaldeans. These four animals are in reality the symbols of the four Elements, and of the four *lower* principles in man. They correspond likewise physically and materially to the four constellations that form the suite or cortege, so to speak, of the Solar God, and occupy during the winter solstice the four cardinal points of the zodiacal circle—Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, and Aquarius. And what were some of the alleged Pagan "superstitions"? Hesiod believed, for instance, that "the winds were the sons of the giant Typhoeus," who were chained and unchained at will by Æolus, and the polytheistic Greeks accepted it along with Hesiod. While the Hellenes were taught that Æolus tied and untied

the winds, the Jews believed as fervently that their Lord God, "with smoke coming out of his nostrils and fire out of his mouth, rode upon a cherub and did fly; and was seen upon the wings of the wind" (II Sam. 22: 9, 11). The expressions of the two nations are either both figures of speech, or both superstitions. We think they are neither; but only arise from a keen sense of oneness with Nature, and a perception of the mysterious and intelligent *behind* every natural phenomenon, which the moderns no longer possess.

If Jupiter, the "chief Daemon of the Pagan Greeks" hurled his deadly thunderbolts and lightnings at those who excited his wrath, so did the Lord God of Abraham and Jacob. We find in II Samuel, that "the Lord thundered from heaven and the most High uttered his voice, and he sent out arrows (thunderbolts) and scattered them (Saul's armies) with lightning, and discomforted them" (22: 14-15). Do they not say that their "God is a consuming fire" (Deut. 4: 24) who appeared generally *as* Fire and "encompassed by fire"; and did not Elijah seek for him (the Lord) in the "great strong wind, and in the earthquake"? Do not the Christians repeat the same after them? Do they not, moreover, sacrifice to this day to the same *"God of Wind and Water?"* They do, because special prayers for rain, dry weather, trade-winds and the calming of storms on the seas exist to this hour in the prayer-books of the three Christian churches; and the several hundred sects of the Protestant religion offer them to their God upon every threat of calamity. The fact that they are no more answered by Jehovah, than they were probably by Jupiter *Pluvius,* does not alter the fact of these prayers being addressed to the Power of Powers supposed *to rule over the Elements,* or of these Powers being identical in Paganism and Christianity. Or have we to believe that such prayers are crass idolatry and absurd "superstition" only when addressed by a Pagan to his *idol,* and that the same superstition is suddenly transformed into praiseworthy piety and religion whenever the name of the celestial addressee is changed? The above is not a defense of Pagan gods, not is it an attack on the Christian deity, nor does it mean belief in either. The writer is quite impartial and rejects the testimony in favor of either, neither praying to nor believing in nor dreading any such "personal" and anthropomorphic God.

At any rate good Christians, and especially Biblical Protestants, ought to show more reverence for the four Elements, if they would show any for Moses. For the Bible manifests the consideration and

mystic significance in which they were held by the Hebrew Lawgiver, on every page of the Pentateuch. The tent which contained the Holy of Holies "was a Cosmic Symbol, sacred in one of its meanings to the Elements, the four cardinal points, and *Ether*." Josephus shows it built in white, the colour of Ether. And this explains why in the Egyptian and the Hebrew temples, according to Clemens Alexandrinus, a gigantic curtain, supported by five pillars, separated the *sanctum sanctorum* (now represented by the altar in Christian churches) wherein the priests alone were permitted to enter, from the part accessible to the profane. By its *four* colours the curtain symbolized the four principle Elements, and signified the knowledge of the divine that the *five* senses of men can enable them to acquire with the help of the *four* Elements. The whole was an allegorical symbol. It is through the four high Rulers over the four points and Elements that our five senses may become cognizant of the hidden truths of Nature; and not at all, as Clemens would have it, that it is the elements *per se* that furnished the Pagans with divine Knowledge or the knowledge of God.

The square form of the Tabernacle meant just the same thing as it still means, to this day, in the exoteric worship of the Chinese and Tibetans—the four cardinal points signifying that which the four sides of the pyramids, obelisks, and other such square erections mean. Josephus takes care to explain the whole thing. He declares that the Tabernacle pillars are the same as those raised at Tyre to the four Elements, which were placed on pedestals whose four angles faced the four cardinal points: adding that "the angles of the pedestals had equally the four figures of the Zodiac" on them, which represented the same orientation. The idea may be traced in the Zoroastrian caves, in the rock-cut temples of India, as in all the sacred square buildings of antiquity that have survived to this day.

We produce *causes,* and these awaken the corresponding Powers in the sidereal World; which Powers are magnetically and irresistibly attracted to and react upon, those who produce these causes, whether such persons be practically evil-doers or simply thinkers who brood mischief. At the same time the four great Kings of the elements are the four living creatures "who have the likeness of a man" of Ezekiel's visions, called by the translators of the Bible, Cherubim and Seraphim, etc., and by the Occultists the "Winged Globes," the "Fiery Wheels," and in the Hindu Pantheon by a number of different

names. All these Gandharvas, the "Sweet Songsters," the Asuras, Kinnaras, and Nagas, are the allegorical descriptions of the "four Maharajas."

The succession of primary aspects of Nature with which the succession of Rounds of Earth's evolution is concerned, has to do with the development of the Elements (in the occult sense)—Fire, Air, Water, Earth. If Nature is the "Ever-becoming" on the manifested plane, then those Elements are to be regarded in the same light: they have to evolve, progress, and increase to the Manvantaric end. The Elements, whether simple or compound, could not have remained the same since the commencement of the evolution of our earth chain. Everything in the Universe progresses steadily in the Great Cycle, while incessantly going up and down in the smaller cycles. Nature is never stationary during the Manvantara, and it is ever *becoming,* not simply *being;* and mineral, vegetable and human life are always adapting their organisms to the then reigning Elements; therefore *those* Elements at the beginning of the Manvantara were fitted for them then, as they are now for the life of present humanity.

The first Round, we are taught, developed but one Element (Fire), and a nature and humanity in what may be called one aspect of Nature—called by some, very unscientifically, though it may be so *de facto*—"One-dimensional Space." The second Round brought forth and developed two Elements. Matter in the second Round may be figuratively referred to as two-dimensional. Then the centres of consciousness (destined to develop into humanity as we know it) of the third Round arrived at a perception of the third Element—Water. Those of the fourth have added *earth* as a state of matter to their stock as well as the three other Elements in their present transformation. None of the so-called elements were, in the three preceding rounds, as they are now. For all we know, FIRE may have been *pure* Akasha, the first matter of the *Magnum Opus* of the Creators and "Builders"; AIR, simply Nitrogen, "the breath of the Supporters of the Heavenly Dome," as the Mahometan mystics call it; WATER, that primordial fluid which was required, according to Moses, to make *a living soul* with.

In esoteric philosophy every physical particle corresponds to and depends on its higher *noumenon*—the Being to whose essence it belongs. And as above so below, the Spiritual evolves from the Divine, the psycho-mental from the Spiritual—the whole animate

and (seemingly) inanimate Nature evolving on parallel lines, and drawing its attributes from above as well as from below. The ancients knew these Powers so well that, while concealing their true natures under various allegories, for the benefit (or to the detriment) of the uneducated, they never departed from the multiple object in view, while *inverting* them. They contrived to throw a thick veil over the nucleus of truth concealed by the symbol, but they ever tried to preserve the latter as a record for future generations, sufficiently transparent to allow their wise men to discern that truth behind the fabulous form of the glyph or allegory. They are accused of superstition and credulity, those ancient sages. And this by those very nations which, learned in all the modern arts and sciences, cultured and wise in their generation, accept to this day as their one living and infinite God, the anthropomorphic "Jehovah" of the Jews.

Man is composed of all the Great Elements: Fire, Air, Water, Earth and Ether—the Elementals which belong respectively to these Elements feel attracted to man by reason of their co-essence. That element which predominates in a certain constitution will be the ruling element throughout life. "At the moment when each of us receives life and being he is taken in charge by the genii (Elementals) who preside over births, and who are classed below the astral Powers" (Superhuman astral Spirits), says Hermes. "All these Genii ('Gods' or Dhyanis too, not only the genii or 'guided forces') preside over mundane affairs, they shake and overthrow the constitution of States and of individuals. They imprint their likeness on our Souls, they are present in our nerves, our marrow, our veins, our arteries, and our very brain substance."

The physical forces are all biological in their *essence,* seeing that they intermingle with and often merge into those Forces which we have named intellectual and moral—the first being the vehicles, so to say, the *upadhi* of the second. Why should man, possessed as he is of every kind of force—magnetic, sympathetic, antipathetic, nervous, dynamical, occult, mechanical, mental—be the only exception in Nature? Why cannot even the Elements have their vehicles in what we call the physical forces? And why, above all, should such beliefs be called "superstitions," along with the religions of old?

YOUTH FORUM

Far beneath the anxious or the smiling surface of our normal lives, so far indeed, sometimes, that we ourselves do not suspect it, there exists in many of us (not all, no doubt, for some of us must be sane) a kind of disaffection, a dark and subtle self-contempt. But if men are really immortal, and potential gods, as Theosophy has declared, why should such feelings exist at all—or at any rate, why so deeply?

> We view the world from far off, you and I,
> as though it were a river moving endlessly away from us,
> forever flowing, forever far away . . .

A sense of separativeness, of estrangement from the world and from ourselves, was spoken of last month as one of the most basic mobilizers of man's self-contempt. And yet to say this may not be necessarily to answer the question, but simply to change its wording. Rilke beautifully does much of this rephrasing for us in his Eighth Elegy, where he asks: "Who has twisted us like this, so that —/no matter what we do—we have the bearing/of a man going away? As on the last hill/that shows him all his valley, for the last time,/he turns, stands still, and lingers, so we live,/forever saying farewell." The question, Who or what has twisted us? is one which perhaps may be answered on more than one level, and in more than one way. Psychologists have said a great deal, and often with great cogency, concerning the causes of some of the pathological extremities of this sense of estrangement, causes which, although repressed, turn up in various ways—perhaps as the wish to kill, or most elusively of all, as the wish to die. It may be said that these wishes, and acts resulting from them, reflect a deeply implicit hatred of self—and this applies even to acts of aggression, which are very often merely the vehement denials of such hatred.

And yet just some untutored common sense and a bit of Theosophy should be sufficient to indicate that estrangements and resulting

aversions may sometimes have other causes than the infantile frustrations and traumas catalogued by psychologists, essential though such studies of course can be. For surely there must also be considered the words of Gabriel Marcel quoted last month concerning the need for spiritual fulfilment, or what Viktor Frankl calls fulfilment of the "will to meaning." Fulfilment—is that not after all what we love and envy in our children most, their sense of freedom and completeness within the boundaries of childhood? And yet as one grows up, it seems that the sense of self-fulfilment becomes something quite difficult to attain, and more and more sporadic, as though our awareness of potentialities increased geometrically as our years increased by mere arithmetic, and as though our secret expectations of omnipotence became acutest just as we had to bring ourselves to recognize the impossibility, within one life, of any such achievement.

But what *can* we achieve in one life? Surely this is the question we must ask ourselves if we hope to experience any happiness or sense of fulfilment at all in this world, or hope at least to stave off the bitterness of despair.

This question seems at first terribly difficult, but seen from one (perhaps over-simple) point of view, it may be quite an easy one to answer, for if we ask, Why are we living? the temptation is great just to say we are living in order to live, and that it is our foremost duty to be as alive as possible, as sensitive, caring, perceptive as we can.

> And sometimes I can sense the ungrasped sentiments of objects:
> a road that bears with love its human freight,
> a domineering table, a friendly pair of shoes . . .

Thus we should try to be awake to each delicious or distasteful subtlety, although of course this does not imply gushing with emotion at the turn of a leaf in a breeze, nor on every side committing what is called the "pathetic fallacy" of attributing to objects the thoughts and feelings of human beings (as the poet quoted may, to an extent, have done). But it does mean bringing as much consciousness and courage as possible to life—courage to see things as they are, and not just as they at first appear, whether they appear as meaningless or as fraught with urgent symbolism; and courage above all else to see ourselves as we are, and see the forces at work within us as they try to determine our actions—forces, for instance, such as those defined by Freud as the life- and death-instincts, or the constructive and destructive leanings of our personality, which, ac-

cording to Karl Menninger, in his remarkable *Man Against Himself,* "are in constant conflict and interaction just as are similar forces in physics, chemistry, and biology." He continues: "To create and to destroy, to build up and to tear down, these are the anabolism and katabolism of the personality, no less than of the cells and the corpuscles—the two directions in which the same energies exert themselves.

"These forces," says Menninger, "originally directed inward and related to the intimate problems of the self, the ego, come ultimately to be directed outwardly toward other objects. This corresponds with physical growth and personality development. Failure to develop, from this standpoint, means an incomplete turning outward of the self-directed destructiveness and constructiveness with which we are—by hypothesis—born. Instead of fighting their enemies, such persons fight (destroy) themselves; instead of loving friends or music or the building of a house, such persons love only themselves. (Hate and love are the emotional representatives of the destructive and constructive tendencies.) But no one evolves so completely as to be entirely free from self-destructive tendencies; indeed, the phenomena of life, the behavior peculiar to different individuals, may be said to express the resultant of these conflicting factors."

We have quoted from Menninger's book at some length in order to show the importance of a rigorous self-examination—even in the "mere" psychological sense—to the eventual eradication of feelings of self-contempt from which all of us from time to time suffer. But an even more important reason for citing this passage is to point out a vital distinction between "turning outward" towards the world in all its infinite variety and challenge, and following the destructive trend towards separativeness, the trend which has been shown to be a basic mobilizer of man's hatred of self and of others. Externally it may appear that these two attitudes are the same, but then almost all exact opposites resemble each other externally. The difference lies within our invisible yet crucial intentions, for they alone determine whether we become engaged in externalities in order to forget the secret hankering in our hearts for godhood, or else in order to search life out—as through a glass, darkly—for images of our own tarnished divinity, and that of the world's evolving soul.

Then, too, there was that time I heard a song from childhood—
heard it.

No clever variation could have made me cry.
And once, out on a rocky point that gnawed at the edge of the sea,
I saw another human being—saw.
No trick of minds or mirrors could have made me love.

Turn around,
and the river is running towards you.

(*To be concluded*)

"CLEARING THE ROADS"

A beautiful task is that of making easier the tasks of others. An exquisite act is that which makes easier the lives of others.

A noble and gracious movement of hand or foot is that which removes the obstacle placed by Nature or by men in the midst of the pathway: whether it be the peel of fruit on which one may slip, or the branch of a thorn that may tear one's flesh; whether it be the sharp pebble or the hanging vines that obstruct the pathways and seem like serpents crossing them.

How happy, how agile he goes who is clearing the roads and the walks of all that which is a hindrance and an obstacle to the progress of the rest.

The traveler goes singing on his way. Without realizing it he traverses the ways and at dusk he notices, with jubilant surprise, that on putting aside and removing the obstacles that hindered the progress of others along the road, he has cleared away marvelously the difficulties of his own road.

—AMADO NERVO

on the lookout

"Second Thoughts on the Religious Revival"

An article of this title by Prof. Herber J. Muller (*Harper's,* February) contains some informative analyses of natural interest to Theosophical students. (This essay is drawn from Prof. Muller's forthcoming book, *Religion and Freedom in the Modern World,* published by the University of Chicago Press.) Prof. Muller begins with the criticism which his own agnostic convictions necessitate:

> If God is to bless America, let it be said at once that the religious revival of recent times is hardly a revival of the spirit of Christ. Much of what passes for religious faith in America today comes down to a belief that it's simply a good thing to believe—it makes you feel better, maybe makes your neighbor behave better. Churchmen themselves often support such attitudes by dwelling on the spiritual comforts of religion, the personal satisfaction it gives, the peace of mind. It may appear that there is no better buy than Christianity.

This, in modern parlance, is the "soft sell." The appeal is to those who wish a neatly-packaged means to a greater sense of personal well-being, while the "back to God" movement led by the American Legion and the law passed by Congress putting the nation "under God" are returns to a more medieval approach. Meanwhile one cannot help agreeing with Prof. Muller that "millions of Americans are religious illiterates, as incapable of a genuine spirituality as of any hard thinking."

Catholic Reactionism

Since Prof. Muller speaks neither for the Catholic nor the Protestant, he looks dispassionately at the manifestations of any exclusive theology. Concerning the Catholic medievalists, he writes:

> The abiding difficulties of Christian tradition are pointed up by the vogue of Thomism, among Catholics. When Jacques Maritain claims "scientific certitude" for St. Thomas Aquinas' proofs of the existence of God, argument becomes futile; one can only say that he cannot possibly demonstrate this certitude. He evades the real problem, which is that in the light of modern

knowledge and the scientific spirit many men of good will are simply unable to believe in the absolute truths of Christianity, still less in the infallible authority of any church. Too many churchmen still aggravate the problem by branding honest doubt or disbelief as not merely mistaken but irresponsible, almost treason to the cause both of truth and of democracy. They may even remind us that St. Thomas prescribed death for heretics.

The Literal Bible and Irrational Man

In respect to fundamentalism, Prof. Muller is no less decisive:

No less troublesome is the Protestant reversion fundamentalism, as in the highly influential thought of Karl Barth. Barth repudiated the whole effort of St. Thomas to make Christianity rational by insisting on not only the absolute but the exclusive authority of the Bible, declaring it the sole source of truth about God and man. Many of his followers have rejected more flatly all independent claims of philosophy or reason. They have also magnified his seemingly arbitrary interpretations of the Bible, for instance his neglect of the fact that neither Christ nor the prophets of Israel made any reference whatever to his cardinal doctrine of the Fall of Man. The popularity of his "theology of crisis" is symptomatic of the whole revolt against reason in the modern world—a revolt that I think is a doubtful boon to Christianity, and certainly no boon to a free society.

Prof. Muller has genuine respect for any religion which enhances the conscience of the individual, but he is unable to overlook "traditional attitudes that long made religion hostile to democracy." The principles of authority and hierarchy do not equate with the ideals of liberty and equality.

From Christianity to Village Religion

In the March-April issue of *Man* (published by the Royal Anthropological Institute), Dr. Austin J. Shelton discusses the failure of Christians to permanently convert Africans. Dr. Shelton, who is Senior Lecturer at the University of Nigeria, tells us that "neither Christianity nor Islam brought a truly 'revolutionary monotheistic idea' to most West African peoples." If the idea of "God" is not new or different, what then has been the apparent appeal of Christianity? Dr. Shelton says that the Christian substitute for a working ideal of God is "immediate material benefits":

What strength Christianity has gained in West Africa is often closely related to the rewards which it offered for conversion or the semblance of conversion—especially education which would bring immediate material benefits to Africa. The high rate

reversion from Christianity to modified traditional village religion is indicative of the lasting influence of village religion and the failure of Christianity itself to offset the anti-European reaction (nationalism and Africanism) which very often associates Christianity with colonialism. Islam has more permanency for several reasons: it did not usually require such a great number of immediate and important behavioral changes among Africans, it was not brought by Europeans and it was made originally effective by the fact of conquest by peoples who often remained among those converted.

"Divine Withdrawal"

Two lines of development appear in monotheistic religions—an abstract impersonal concept of Deity outside material existence and that of a personal God tethered to man's needs, pains, and desires. Dr. Shelton shows how this latter idea develops when "men require the comprehensible for immediate acts of religious worship." He describes this process of anthropomorphism as "divine withdrawal." In West African religion:

> The lesser gods loom large psychologically in people's minds, although the worshippers are generally aware of their limitations. This is the actual reason, though, for the apparent "withdrawal" of the high god. Because men cannot understand him (a result of his very ineffability), they develop a system of intermediaries through whom they can communicate their aspirations, needs and adorations, and who often can be manipulated to some degree. Men can more readily identify with such intermediaries, and especially can symbolize them so that religiously sanctioned mental images, as distinct from abstract terms (the only proper terms for God's "qualities"), might be formed. The retainable mental images, which include also the majority of constructed sayings and stories about lesser deities, constitute the means whereby the religious beliefs are perpetuated, ensuring through their concreteness that the rituals and other means of worship will be carried on properly from generation to generation. So God is separated not so much because he is creative and has willingly "relinquished control" after his initial creation, but rather because he is by his nature so abstract that it is virtually impossible for the ordinary worshipper to understand or, indeed, to do any more than to name and to discuss in the most general and vague terms possible.

Anthropomorphisms versus Metaphysical Abstractions

Thought about "secondary and subordinate powers of nature," however, need not involve such rude personalities of deity as those described by Dr. Shelton: they *may* be "metaphysical abstractions,"

as explained by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* I, 43-4:

> The secondary and subordinate powers of Nature, anthropomorphized, have been worshipped as God and Gods by the common herd of every age. It is impossible to conceive anything without a cause: the attempt to do so makes the mind a blank. This is virtually the condition to which the mind must come at last when we try to trace back the chain of causes and effects, but both science and religion jump to this condition of blankness much more quickly than is necessary; for they ignore the metaphysical abstractions which are the only conceivable cause of physical concretions.

Of course, simple formulas or general analyses, such as Dr. Shelton's, give only brief definition to the problems. There is obvious merit in helping starving people with "immediate material benefits." (Gandhi spoke to this point, saying, in effect, that God dare not come to a hungry man but in the form of food.) But Dr. Shelton does not say that West Africans would *need* these "benefits" if left alone. Determining other people's needs is basically a moral problem involving complex decisions about "the good life." It is questionable whether Western religion and tradition have solved this problem suitably for themselves, let alone for other cultures.

Difficulty of Communicating

In his contribution to a Chicago University symposium (1963) on "Bridges of Human Understanding" (later published as a paperback under the same title by University Publishers), Dr. Raghavan Iyer, of Oxford University, criticizes our general failure to communicate with people of "both developed and developing communities." Specifically:

> The chief obstacle to effective communication is the deep-seated habit of comparing the best in one's own culture or religion or tradition with the worst features of other cultures or religions or traditions. We cannot judge Christianity by the Inquisition, Hinduism by untouchability, Islam by Tartar atrocities, Judaism by the Crucifixion, or African religions by Voodooism. I wish to suggest that we shall attain more effective communication if we adopt a new etiquette which replaces self-glorification by self-examination, which requires us to look for the best in other cultures, and to be aware of the worst in our own. This is easier said than done, but we must make the attempt.

The self-examination which is "easier said than done" finds similar expression for many students of Theosophy in the words of Robert Crosbie. Speaking of the difficulties involved in work for

Theosophy, he says: "We have undertaken a task—not because we think ourselves so eminently fit, but because we see the need and there is no one else to do it."

"Counseling the Dying"

The importance of this book (the collaboration of four pastoral and psychiatric counselors) lies in its direct approach to the "dying" human being as one who can transform old attitudes, initiate new ones, and *live* philosophically, even at the end of life. This awareness grew through the experience of the counselors as they shared and discussed their experiences. (*Counseling the Dying* is published by Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1964.)

Though the four began with varying points of view, their own psychological discoveries generated a new sort of shared language for discussing the "meaning of death." The authors explain their common conviction:

> We believe that death is a far more important event in the psychological history of the individual than is usually faced. Herman Feifel shows that a primary subconscious concern of the person over fifty, as revealed through projective testing, is preoccupation with his own death. The existential philosophers have made us aware of the contrast between meaningless life and meaningful death. For some persons there is the need to die with meaning and dignity even though life may have been sordid and uncreative. As with the swan and its mythical final song and the animal that is reputed to return to its "dying place" there is apparently an innate mystical meaning in the terminal event of life.

The Need for Philosophical Resources

The following paragraphs indicate the common background view:

> Our present shared venture into considering the tasks of counseling with the dying is but one indication of what is taking place. The staff ministry in hospitals, the seminars of pastors and physicians, the changing climate in the social and personality sciences from a mechanistic to a psychocentric view of man, the mystical quality in the biological and physical sciences, are all making their contribution to a broader base from which philosophical ideas are re-examined and treatment practices are re-evaluated. . . . [But] we have yet to develop within the philosophical resources of man a view of his nature that is conceptually adequate to use the advancements that have been made in other fields.
>
> The implications of this for psychotherapy are obvious. It is not enough to approach the dying patient with rituals and medical

interventions that merely prolong the process of dying. The meaning of both life and death must be considered by the professionals who treat the patient, so that the patient can find personal fulfillment, a fuller self-realization even *in extremis*. This moves us quickly into an area beyond technique. This brings us into a naked confrontation of the existential values than can be achieved both in living and in dying. This obliges us to face our fears, our failures, and our phantasies unmasked and with courage.

Continued Life Beyond Theological Definition

Theosophists, of course, feel that the idea of reincarnation affords a true link between "living and dying" which moves men toward courage in facing "reality," rather than to mere escape in phantasy. The pamphlet "What is Death?" has a direct appeal on this point:

> Theosophy holds that there is a continual evolution for every human soul, that there is no final heaven or hell, and that all who die return again to earth where they may, according to natural law, recover lost friends and proceed to develop further, as well as to deepen the bonds of understanding only temporarily cut off by the dissolution of the physical body.
>
> The Theosophist feels that it is both sad and unnecessary for the natural questions about death to be left without any hope of a reasonable answer. . . . Merely to accept or try to believe any theological notion promising a future life in heaven will help but little. In the first place, no one can learn anything either in heaven or hell, as these "places" are commonly described, and if we think those whom we have loved must always go to a place where they can no longer expand and grow, the story is just as sad and hopeless as it would be if we said that nothing lives after the body dies.

The Counselor's Task

The authors of *Counseling the Dying* are careful not to assert a personal viewpoint or particular notion of hereafter when "counseling" a dying person. The sole concern of the counselor is to help the patient achieve an integrating peace of mind:

> It may well be that one of our tasks is to develop the idea that men can die healthy. While the physical equipment may wear out or break down, the achievement of the full measure of self-awareness and spiritual realization makes this terminal moment not a time of defeat but a final expression of faith.
>
> This view of wholeness then could become one of the qualities of being that reveals the commitment of man to the destiny that is an innate aspect of his being. Faith then is not so much some-

thing you believe as something you are. The power of faith lies not in a structure of ideas that need justification but rather in a way of life that leads toward personal fulfillment. . . .

When we can face death with honesty, keep open the channels of real communication, surround it with loving concern of a real community that cares to the end, and enrich our understanding by an honest and unmasked dialogue among all concerned, the way may be open toward a new era in the care for the dying as well as our care for the living.

The Scope of Reincarnation

Reincarnation is, truly, the only "open-ended" view of the relationship of death to Life. No particular personal view of the hereafter, Christian or otherwise, can help being extended, and may be ennobled, by "the scope of reincarnation." In the book of this title (a condensation of *The Ocean of Theosophy*), the depth and breadth of reincarnation are clearly delineated. Here, Reincarnation becomes considerably more than an intriguing metaphysical idea, attractive chiefly for its suggestion of a glamorous past and a romantic future. Instead, it now appears as a conception of life bringing profound meaning to our feelings about the dignity of man, leading to long thoughts concerning both the responsibilities and the potentialities of all human beings. Mr. Judge says:

Viewing life and its probable object, with all the varied experience possible for man, one must be forced to the conclusion that a single life is not enough for carrying out all that is intended by Nature, to say nothing of what man himself desires to do. The scale of variety in experience is enormous. There is a vast range of powers latent in man which we see may be developed if opportunity be given. Knowledge infinite in scope and diversity lies before us, and especially in these days when special investigation is the rule. We perceive that we have high aspirations with no time to reach up to their measure, while the great troop of passions and desires, selfish motives and ambitions, war with us and among themselves, pursuing us even to the door of death. All these have to be tried, conquered, used, subdued. One life is not enough for all this. (*The Scope of Reincarnation,* p. 33.)

"Whither Theosophy?"

Under this title Grahame W. Barratt reviews E. L. Gardner's comparatively recent pamphlet "There is No Religion Higher than Truth." (*The Psychic Observer,* August.) True to form, Mr. Barratt is scathing in his denunciation of those who usurped power by "occult" pretentions after H.P.B.'s death, even going so far as to dis-

regard her teachings and set up their own elaborate hierarchy to promulgate their own brand of "Theosophy." Mr. Barratt comments that it is very strange that Mr. Gardner, who "has known of the Leadbeaterian unreliability for some thirty-four years," is only now admitting it publicly—and "with *three* authors to give cumulative backing to simple facts." He does, however, commend *The Canadian Theosophist* in always having taken a determined stand against these manipulations; and says further:

> Whatever organizational treachery fills the horizon, one can be quite certain that the message left by H. P. Blavatsky—veiled and incomplete as it inevitably became—will bear examination by all intelligent people all over the world. Esotericists can take enduring comfort in the fact that a SOCIETY, (in the sense of assembly under one roof) is not essential. Even in isolated studentship there is a preparatory element which bestirs the thought-world of mankind. H.P.B. had no time for "the more alphabetically adorned."

Writing in the "Conclusion" to *The Key to Theosophy,* Madame Blavatsky notes:

> The future of the Theosophical Movement will depend almost entirely upon the degree of selflessness, earnestness, devotion, and last, but not least, on the amount of knowledge and wisdom possessed by those members on whom it will fall to carry on the work . . . Every such attempt has hitherto ended in failure, because, sooner or later, it has degenerated into a sect, set up hard-and-fast dogmas of its own, and so lost by imperceptible degrees that vitality which living truth alone can impart. . . . But if this danger be averted, then the Society will live on, into, and through the twentieth century.